

Temple Emanu-El

Avraham Perets
Rabbi

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Dr. Donald Sloan
President

July 6, 2018

A year and a half ago, the FBI and the local Myrtle Beach police discovered that Benjamin McDowell, a resident of Conway, was ready to act in the spirit of Dylan Roof, the perpetrator of the Charleston Massacre. Mr. McDowell specifically mentioned our Temple as a target and therefore, the FBI and the police did not take any chances and started a massive operation that resulted in the arrest of Mr. McDowell.

I was impressed with the sophisticated work of law enforcement agencies and their dedication and for that my community is eternally grateful.

When we discovered that Mr. McDowell was planning to attack our synagogue we were in shock and disbelief that someone would even consider to hurt our innocent people.

Some of our members are Holocaust survivors and this case brought back dark memories from the horrible era when 6 million Jews were massacred when their only crime was their Jewish heritage.

Mr. McDowell's actions caused us a tremendous mental anguish and distress. We never met Mr. McDowell and the thought that he wanted to come and start shooting at our innocent members for no reason whatsoever is very disturbing.

In addition – we now have a full-time security guard at all services and we installed security systems and cameras, all these measures created a huge financial burden on our limited operating budget.

In summary, this heinous act has changed our Temple community lives forever. We hoped that racism and anti-Semitism were matters of the past. Mr. McDowell's actions proved that we were wrong, and it still exists in the 21st century. I think that Mr. McDowell is a dangerous man and I hope that he will be educated in jail and make the transformation to a peaceful citizen.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Avi Perets
Temple Emanu-El
Myrtle Beach, SC